

Spring
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State Senator Liz Brater

The Lansing Report

Greetings from Lansing! I'm grateful for another opportunity to update you on some of the many issues I have been working on during the 2003-04 legislative session.

We have been working hard to assure future generations clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment. I joined Governor Granholm and U.S. Congresswoman Debbie Stabenow to explore ways we can reduce job outsourcing at the state and federal levels to help Michigan workers keep their jobs. I have met regularly with school superintendents, school board members, teachers, and university officials, faculty, and students in my district to look for ways to strengthen state support for K-12 and higher ed. I also enjoy regular meetings with health care professionals in Washtenaw County to address improvements to our health care system. Agreement has been reached on the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System bill, which will allow the Department of Environmental Quality to collect some \$5.4 million in fees so that those who discharge toxics into our lakes and streams will pay the cost of receiving permits. I am also co-chairing an environmental task force to gather input from citizens on current environmental issues. (See back page of this newsletter for dates, times, and locations.)

I look forward to seeing you at one of these meetings.

Liz Brater
State Senator • 18th District



Want to know more?

Mailing funds are limited and I would like to keep in touch with you. Please take a minute to e-mail me your e-mail address so I can send you legislative updates. If you don't have e-mail, please call my toll-free number to receive updates by mail. Thank you!

Michigan Legislative Issues

Water Legacy Act

On March, 3, 2004, Rep. Chris Kolb (D-Ann Arbor) and I joined Governor Jennifer Granholm and DEQ Director Steve Chester in announcing the Michigan Water Legacy Act, a comprehensive initiative that will protect Michigan's fresh water aquifers and lakes by regulating water

withdrawals. Many thirsty states and countries are eyeing the Great Lakes as a source of fresh water, and we need to make every effort to protect and conserve this precious resource.

Under the proposed plan, new facilities making withdrawals greater than two million gallons a day or 100 million gallons a year would be required to obtain permits. Current water users would not be affected unless they sought to increase withdrawals or use additional sources. The plan would have immediate effect, but requirements would

be phased in over the next five years towards full implementation in 2009. Annual reporting will be required of all permit holders.

The Michigan Water Legacy Act would also go far in meeting the goals set forth in the 1985 Great Lakes Charter, developed by a consortium of Great Lakes states and provinces. The Charter calls for conserving and protecting the levels and flows of the Great Lakes and their tributary and connecting waters.

"Our state is defined by its waters, which are critical to our state's economy," said Gov. Granholm. "This legislation will make Michigan a regional leader in protecting the Great Lakes for future generations."



Michigan Education Budget

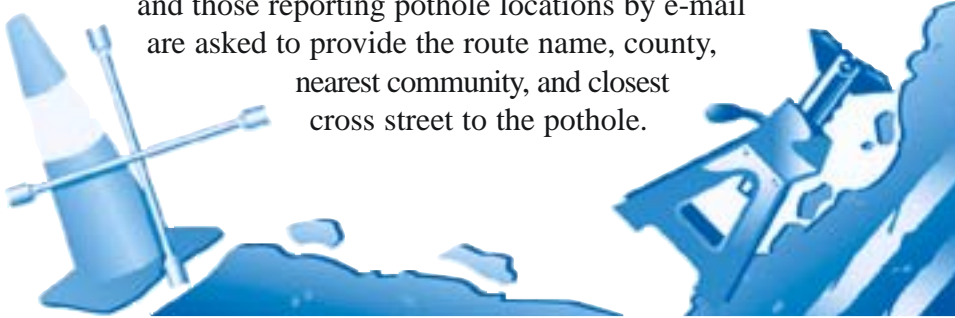
The 2004-05 budget that recently passed the Senate keeps the foundation allowance at \$6,700 per pupil. The bill reduces payments for at-risk pupils by \$9.9 million and early childhood and vocational education funding by \$2 million each. In addition, the bill reduces funding for intermediate school districts by \$12.5 million. While I supported the legislation in consideration of the current budgetary constraints, I remain

concerned about the static per pupil funding in light of rising health care and administrative costs experienced by the districts, as well as the reduction in at-risk payments. I am hopeful that a more generous compromise can be reached before the budget is finalized in June.



Potholes

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has released a toll-free telephone number so that citizens can help identify the location of potholes. If you are aware of a dangerous pothole, you can call toll-free **1-888-296-4546**. This line is available 24 hours a day. For residents with Internet access, log onto the MDOT website at www.michigan.gov/mdot and click on the reporting potholes link. Callers and those reporting pothole locations by e-mail are asked to provide the route name, county, nearest community, and closest cross street to the pothole.



Solid Waste Surcharge

I have proposed legislation to amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to create a surcharge to be assessed at a \$3/ton rate on municipal and commercially generated solid waste. The fee is expected to raise \$40 million, which will support recycling efforts, raise awareness of recycling benefits, and energize curbside recycling programs.

We know that weekly curbside recycling is an effective and practical way to protect our environment. This legislation will increase recycling rates in Michigan, which are below the national average at only 20 percent. The Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee has already held hearings on the legislation and discussions are continuing.

Hazing

The Senate has approved legislation that will make it easier for authorities to prosecute hazing cases. Michigan is one of only seven states without anti-hazing laws. The legislation makes hazing a one-year, \$2,500 misdemeanor and a 15-year, \$10,000 felony, depending on the severity of the incident. The bills are currently in the House Criminal Justice Committee where they are expected to be considered this spring.

Working on Your Behalf

Since taking office as your Senator in January, 2003, I have sponsored legislation on issues including civil rights, comparable pay, insurance reform, land use, occupational licensing, fair labor practices, criminal procedures, and recreation. In addition, I sponsored legislation to permit voting by mail. I will continue to work on issues that will make life better for all Michigan citizens. You can view a complete list of legislation I have sponsored at www.senate.michigan.gov/brater.



Mental Health Month



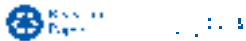
Currently, one in five American adults and children are affected with mental illness, making mental illness the most prevalent health problem in the country. An estimated two-thirds of adults and young people with mental health problems are not getting the help they need. In order to raise awareness of the need for appropriate and accessible services for all people with mental illnesses, on March 16, 2004, I introduced a resolution proclaiming May 2004 as Mental Health Month in Michigan. The resolution urges all citizens, government agencies, public and private institutions, businesses, and schools to recommit our state to the treatment and care of those affected.



State Senator Liz Brater

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Environmental Town Hall Meetings

- **Thursday, May 13 at 7 PM**
in Ann Arbor at
Washtenaw Community College,
Morris Lawrence Building,
Room 101, hosted by Sen. Brater.
- **Thursday, May 20 at 7 PM**
at the Highland Park
Career Academy, Glendale at
Second Avenue in Highland Park,
hosted by Sen. Scott.
- **Thursday, June 3 at 7 PM**
at Metro Beach in
Harrison Township,
hosted by Sen. Switalski.

Topic: Children's Health

Topic: Lead Poisoning Prevention

Topic: Clean Beaches

Millie Jeffrey 1910-2004

On Wednesday, March 24, Michigan lost a hero. As an outspoken labor activist and first female Director of the UAW, Mildred M. Jeffrey spent a lifetime devoted to the rights of the oppressed. Over a period of seven decades, she worked on behalf of civil rights, workers' rights, women's rights, gay rights, education, health care, youth employment, and recreation, earning numerous awards, commendations, and distinctions.

Millie marched with the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., advised UAW President Walter Reuther, counted Hubert Humphrey and Geraldine Ferraro among her good friends, and served on national commissions during the Kennedy and Carter administrations. In 2000, her work was honored by President Bill Clinton who presented her with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award.

I know of many people, including this Senator, who looked on Millie Jeffrey as a role model. She was tireless and always cheerful and energetic in her advocacy, and never took "no" for an answer.

In her words, "You never win freedom permanently. You have to win it time after time...whether it's union rights, civil rights, or equality for women. We have to keep at it and at it." I will always be grateful for the inroads Millie made as we continue to "keep at it and at it..."